The TWO NEW Covenants -Miles J. Stanford

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Are Christians Under Any "New Covenant"?

The subject of Israel's New Covenant, and the erroneous notion of its relationship to the New Creation Christian and the Body of Christ--the Church, remains a hot topic in dispensational circles. Like the doctrine of the Fall, the subject of the "New Covenant" is a 'watershed' issue in both Christendom and among truly born-again Christians.

Slowly, growing believers are awakening to the serious negative consequences of believing that the Church is the direct, or even indirect, beneficiary of any of God's blessing via Israel's New Covenant. The Church is the primary beneficiary of the Everlasting Covenant!

The TWO NEW Covenants

PAULINE DISPENSATIONALISM stands for the following concerning the relationship between the Everlasting Covenant, Israel's New Covenant, and the heavenly Church:

I - THE EVERLASTING COVENANT -- The Everlasting Covenant of Hebrews 13:20,21 was ratified in eternity past between the Father and the Son, and was fulfilled at the resurrection of Christ.

II - ISRAEL'S NEW COVENANT -- Israel's New Covenant (Jer. 31:31,32; Ezek. 36:26,27; 37:14) is between God and kingdom Israel only, and will be inaugurated and fulfilled at the Second Advent.

III - THE HEAVENLY CHURCH -- God has never made a covenant with the Church.

By means of the common, unequivocal, literal hermeneutic, we will share the scriptural facts as to the relationship between the Everlasting Covenant, Israel's New Covenant, and the heavenly Church.

I - THE EVERLASTING COVENANT:
Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen (Heb. 13:20,21).

The Everlasting Covenant is neither between God and the Church, nor God and Israel, nor God and the Gentiles. Rather, it is between the party of the first part, "the God of peace," and the party of the second part, the "Lord Jesus."

The conditions of this covenant were that if the Great Shepherd would lay down His life for the sheep, the Father would raise Him from among the dead. "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." "But God raised Him from the dead ...." He was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Phil. 2:8; Acts 13:30; Rom. 6:4).

The Everlasting Covenant was ratified in eternity past, and fulfilled at the resurrection. It is a new covenant in respect to TIME (Calvary), and it is new in respect to KIND, i.e., between God the Father and God the Son. It is the fulfillment of Galatians 3:20: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one."

The Mosaic Covenant was between God and Israel, with Moses as mediator. Israel broke that covenant. "My covenant they broke, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:32). Hence Israel's New Covenant is unconditional--"I will." But the Everlasting Covenant is all of God--God the Father, and God the Son: "God is One."

While neither under it, nor a part of it, the Church is the primary beneficiary of the Everlasting Covenant. "I ... make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." The Church has not come to the Covenant; she is in union of life with the Mediator of all covenants!

Israel's New Covenant is based upon the Everlasting Covenant, i.e., the Blood of the Cross.

II - ISRAEL'S NEW COVENANT
This New Covenant is (a) exclusively Israel's; (b) it is for the future millennial and the eternal kingdom; (c) it is eternal; (d) it has several features:

(a) The Recipients -- "Behold, the days will come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah." "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king unto them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Jer. 31:31; Ezek. 37:22).

(b) The Covenant Is Still Future -- Hosea prophesied:

"And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heavens, and with the creeping things of the ground, and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely" (2:18).

A century later Jeremiah prophesied: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel" (31:33).

A century later Ezekiel prophesied: "Thus said the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, to which they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land" (37:21).

Six centuries later Paul stated: "And all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them, that I will take away their sins" (Rom. 11:26,27).

Israel's New Covenant will neither be inaugurated nor fulfilled until after the Great Tribulation (Jacob's trouble), nor until the Deliverer returns to earth, nor until Israel's sins are forgiven.

"Alas, for the day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble [Great Tribulation], but he shall be saved out of it. But they shall serve the Lord, and David, their king, whom I shall raise up unto them" (Jer. 30:7,9).

(c) Israel's New Covenant Is Eternal -- "And David, My servant, shall be king over them, and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in Mine ordinances, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant, and they shall dwell in it, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever; and My servant, David, shall be their prince forever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them" (Ezek. 37:24-26).

(d) The Contents of Israel's New Covenant:

Forgiven -- "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).

Regenerated -- "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. 37:26).

Kingdom Law -- "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:33).

Indwelling Spirit -- "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My ordinances, and do them" (Ezek. 36:27).

Possession of the Land -- "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries to which I have driven them. Yea, I will rejoice over them in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul" (Jer. 32:37,41).

SEPARATE, OR SINK -- Both Classic and Traditional Dispensationalism have always dipped into Israel's comparatively slender New Covenant resources, claiming their "spiritual" blessings for the Church. This unwarranted encroachment has resulted in the downfall of Dispensationalism, and the upsurge of kingdom-oriented Progressive Dispensationalism, and kingdom-centered Covenantism.

If you so much as touch Israel at any point--past, present, or future--you have violated the rightly-divided Word of truth and its Pauline Dispensationalism.

HEBREWS -- The book of Hebrews was written primarily for the Hebrew converts to Christianity. Its purpose was to center them in the glorified Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies, and to protect them from turning back to the Mosaic Covenant and its Law.

Hamilton Smith explains the problem:

To the Jewish converts the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. [Also to the Judaized Church of today.] The purpose is to bring them into the new and heavenly relationship of Christianity by detaching them from the earthly religion of Judaism.

These converts would naturally have strong links with the religion of their fathers. The ties of nature, the love of country, the prospects of earth, and the prejudices of training, would all tend to bind them to the system that God had set aside. It would

therefore be especially difficult for them to enter into the heavenly character of Christianity.

While the Temple was yet standing, and the Aaronic priests were still offering up visible sacrifices, there was the constant danger of those who had made the profession of Christianity turning back to Judaism.

James L. Harris, another early Plymouth Brethren writer, elaborates:

Put yourself in the place of a Hebrew convert on a solemn feast day in Jerusalem--one of the three thousand converted by the first sermon of Peter. Multitudes from all quarters would be assembled around him--Jerusalem filled with worshippers--while he would be apart from all that attracted them.

But would not his soul have many a struggle in keeping away from the festival and its religious throng? Would not he have appeared to be an enemy to his country and to the Temple? But was it really so?

Think further of the contrast he must in his own soul have seen between the upper chamber, or any other unpretentious locality, and the splendid Temple. Must it not have required much simple faith in the Lord Jesus, to meet together for worship with a member as unaccredited as himself, without any visible priest to order their worship, any sacrifice, any incense, any altar?

Would not the multitude keeping holy-day give as it were the lie to the worship he had been engaged in, as if it had been no worship at all? Surely there is great force in the words, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25).

Moreover, the seen things of the Jewish religion were only the shadows of good things to come: whereas the unseen things of Christianity are the substance. They were called to go outside the Jewish camp to reach Christ, who was in the outside place of reproach. Having come outside they are warned not to "draw back" (Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom, pp. 45,46,60) .

MOSES OUT! -- The author of Hebrews used Israel's New Covenant to show these converts that the Mosaic Covenant was to be replaced:

"But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant [grace], which was established upon better promises ['I will"]. For if the first [Mosaic] covenant had been faultless ['weak through the

flesh' Rom. 8:3], then should no place have been sought for the second."

"For finding fault with this, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:6-8).

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which, My covenant, they broke" (Jer. 31:32).

"In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and groweth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13).

Wm. R. Newell gives the proper conclusion concerning these covenants:

The great word as to the former covenant is: "He hath made the first old ... nigh unto vanishing away." It vanished indeed a few years later--in A.D. 70--when the Temple was sacked and burned, and Jerusalem destroyed by Titus.

While place is foretold for the "house of Israel and the house of Judah" in this Epistle of Hebrews, yet lay it to heart: The old Mosaic Covenant is gone (vs. 9,13); and the new covenant not yet come.

The author is writing to Hebrew believers with whose fathers God has made a "covenant," and with which nation He will, by and by, at the Messiah's return to Israel, make a "new" covenant, saying, "And this is the covenant from Me unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:27).

These Hebrew believers were called, then, to face the fact that the old covenant, with the Law principle of blessing, had been set aside. We behold national Israel today without a covenant, "regarded not" by Jehovah!

And so we turn to Hebrews 13:20, and "in the Blood of the Eternal Covenant" between the God of peace and the Lord Jesus, we find ourselves, with true Hebrew believers, all "partakers of a heavenly calling."

And it is the Blood of that Everlasting Covenant which we celebrate when we gather at the Lord's table; so that all hope in man has passed away forever; and so has all hope in Divine Law to be fulfilled by man as the "condition of blessing" (Hebrews, Verse by Verse, p. 259).

The purpose and burden of Hebrews is to draw believers away from anything of

earthly Israel, and to establish them in their heavenly position in Christ, and that by the "Blood of the Everlasting Covenant." He would never point them to Israel's earthly New Covenant for anything heavenly!

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say , His flesh. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..." (Heb. 10:19,20,22).

Try and get that via Israel, past, present, or future!

There is no blood of Israel's New Covenant. That covenant, and all other covenants, are based upon the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant! Therefore:

"For this is My Blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

"And He said unto them, This is My Blood of the New [Everlasting] Covenant, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24).

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My Blood which is shed for you" (Lu. 22:20).

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16).

"This cup is the new covenant in My Blood: this do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:25).

PAULINE -- Paul's ministry was heavenly, to the heavenly Body of Christ. There is no way that he could have resorted to Israel's earthly kingdom New Covenant for ministry to the heavenly Church! His ministry was (is) based upon the "Blood of the Everlasting Covenant." Is there anyone here who has a problem with that? If so, read on.

If you think Paul was a minister of Israel's New Covenant, and if you aspire to be the same, you are kingdom bound, along with Progressive Dispensationalism and its counterpart, Covenantism. Flat, horizontal, earthly-wrong!

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" "But now we are delivered from the law [Israel's New Covenant writes the kingdom law upon their

hearts] having died to that in which we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the [Mosaic] letter" (2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 7:6).

III. THE HEAVENLY CHURCH

Imagine anything of the following being based upon, or drawn from, Israel's New Covenant!

Creation was first in point of time, but the Bridal Church was first in the counsel of God. In eternity past the Father conceived the Church, the Body, the Bride for His Beloved Son, and He kept her a secret and a mystery to man in His heart, until Paul.

"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church-" " ... the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." " ... the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." " ... even the mystery which hath been hidden in God." " ... even the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Eph. 5:32; 3:5,9; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:29).

Hamilton Smith wrote of the Church:

The Church, that which is nearest to the heart of the Father and dearest to the heart of the Son; for therein we learn that the Father has purposed to secure an object that is entirely suited for the love of His Beloved Son.

In the Church as the Bride we see, not only a company of people who find in Christ a satisfying Object for their hearts, but a company of people who become a suited object for His love.

This is the marvel and blessedness of the Church viewed as the Bride of Christ--the Father's bridal gift to His Beloved Son. It is little wonder that the Church should find in Christ an Object of love, but that in the Bride an object should be found entirely suited for the Son to love is indeed a great wonder (The Bride of the Lamb, pp. 18,19).

EACH CHOSEN -- "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

EACH CALLED -- "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

" ... called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29,30).

HEART SECRET -- From eternity past, through the ages and generations of time, the Father kept the Bride secretly hidden in His heart of love. Like a mighty jet stream, high above recorded history and Scripture, all unknown to man, the Father finally brought her in a secret descent to the Cross. Not only the descent, but the Cross itself was secret:

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages unto our glory: which none of the princes of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:7,8).

SINS FORGIVEN -- There, on the Cross, all of the sins that would ever be committed by a member of the Body, were forgiven. "In whom we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7).

SIN CONDEMNED -- Adamic sin was not forgiven. Rather, on the Cross it was judged, condemned, and crucified. "God, sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." "Knowing this, that out old [Adamic] man was crucified with Him" (Rom. 8:3; 6:6).

IDENTIFICATION -- Every member of the Bride-to-be, in Adam, was judicially identified with Christ on the Cross. There He was made to be sin--our sin; hence we were identified with Him in His death to sin. "For He hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us." "I have been crucified with Christ" (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:20).

BURIED WITH HIM -- In our identification with Him in His death to sin, we were buried with Him. "Therefore, we were buried with Him" (Rom. 6:4).

DEATH-SEPARATION -- In order to be raised from the dead, resurrected, as a new creation in the Last Adam, it was necessary for us to be separated from the first Adam by death. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old [first Adam] things are [positionally] passed away; behold, all things are become [positionally] new." "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but to be alive unto God in Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:11).

ASCENDED BRIDE -- Having separated the Bride from Adam and recreated her in

Christ, the Father raised her to the heavenlies--each member of the Body of Christ. "Even when we were dead in sins [God] hath made us alive [recreated] together with Christ ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5,6).

THE BLOOD -- The Bride was redeemed by "the precious Blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 19). The Bride was "made nigh by the Blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). The Bride was positioned in Christ--"hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). The Bride has "boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).

PENTECOST -- Soon the Spirit of God brought her to earth again, like a rushing mighty wind, to begin her experiential history--the Bride growing up incognito, in the world, but not of it. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come ... suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind. ..and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:1,2,4).

THE HOLY SPIRIT -- From that time forth the Spirit of Christ indwells all who believe--all of the chosen, elect, called members of the Body of Christ. Each believer is baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ--in union with Christ. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body" (1 Cor. 12:13).

IN CHRIST -- "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27; Gal. 3:27).

CHRIST IN YOU -- Our union with Christ is reciprocal--we are in Him, and He is in us. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (Col. 1:27; John 14:20).

JOINT-HEIRS -- Each member of the Body of Christ is an heir with Christ. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." "And if children, then heirs--heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:14,16,17).

TOTAL ONENESS -- Our life in Christ is complete--total oneness with Him. "For he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." "And ye are complete in Him." "Accepted in the Beloved." "For we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:6; 5:30).

RAPTURE -- In the Father's appointed time, when He has completed the Body of Christ, He will again take her aloft--this time for the Bride to meet her Bridegroom

in the air. It is then that her eternal position will become experiential condition.

"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." "For our citizenship is in heaven, from where also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body" (1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:20,21).

SECOND ADVENT -- Ere long the Bridegroom-King will bring His all-glorious Bride down from heaven to reign forever with Him over the earth. "When Christ, who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." "And they shall reign for ever and ever" (Col. 3:4; Rev. 20:6; 22:5).

LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER wrote:

The Church is the Bride of the Lamb. A moment's meditation on the exaltation of the Son of God and the incomparable reality of its relation to time and eternity, to earth and heaven, and to men and angels, will compel the conclusion that the Church's elevated position-like that of her Bridegroom--is far above all principalities and powers.

Of His elevation and exaltation is it said, "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20,21) (Systematic Theology VII: 135).

HAMILTON SMITH wrote:

The day is soon coming when the Church will be presented to Christ "a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." It will be of Himself and therefore His like. It will be formed in His affection by the sanctifying and cleansing effect of the Word, and therefore able to respond to His love.

For all eternity Christ is going to have His Beloved Bride, like Himself, one that can think as He thinks, feel as He feels, love as He loves, and hence one that is made perfectly suited to be the object of His love. Then indeed Christ shall be satisfied. He will see of the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied (The Bride of the Lamb, p. 24,25).

O day of wondrous promise!
The Bridegroom and the Bride
Are seen in glory ever;
And love is satisfied!

The God of Peace, that brought

again from the dead our Lord Jesus,

the Great Shepherd of the Sheep,

through the Blood of the

Everlasting Covenant

Hebrews 13:20

BODY BEAUTIFUL
Paul wrote that "it pleased the Father to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:16). This is the ground of the Church's special dignity, and the Gospel which Paul represented and preached. It was not the Gospel of Messiah, the Hope of Israel, nor the Gospel of the once crucified One, now exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sin"; but it was the Gospel of the Son of God revealed in him.

The Son had been revealed to the disciples by the Father before (Matt. 16:17); but now He is revealed in Paul. The Holy Spirit in him was the Spirit of the Son. And anointed with the oil of gladness, he had to go forth and spread the savour of it everywhere. And upon the Son thus revealed within, hangs everything that is peculiar to the calling of the Christian and therefore the Church.

Thus we read, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ... and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:16,17). And again, we read, "that we are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," that is, as Paul here speaks of himself, to have the Son revealed in us.

And this being the predestinated condition of the Church, there comes forth, as in the train of this, all the believer's holy prerogatives--acceptance in the Beloved, with the forgiveness of sins through His Blood--entrance into the treasures of

wisdom and knowledge, so as to have made known to us the mystery of the will of the Father--future inheritance in and with Him, in Whom all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered--and the present seal and earnest of this inheritance in the Holy Spirit.

This bright roll of privileges is inscribed by the Apostle thus--"spiritual blessings in the heavenlies"; and so are linking us with Him Who is the Lord in the heavens (Eph.1:4-12). All this follows upon the Son being revealed in us, by which the believer puts on Christ, so as to be one with Him in every stage of His wondrous way: dead, quickened, raised, and seated in heaven in Him (Eph. 2:6).

A mediator such as Moses, whose best service was to keep Jehovah and the people apart (see Deut. 5:5), could never answer the purpose of this marvelous love of our Father. But in the Son we are accepted; we have everything by our oneness with the Mediator Himself (John 17:26). Nothing less than this could fulfill the desire of our heavenly Father's heart towards us.

The wall of partition, whether between God and sinners, or between Jew and Gentile, is broken down; and we stand together on its ruins, triumphing over them in Christ, our heavenly Father rejoicing over them also. This is the marvelous workmanship of the love of God, and the forming and completing of this union of Christ and the Christian, is the husbandry which the Father is now tending. He is not, as once He was, caring for a land of wheat, and oil, and pomegranates, that His people might eat without scarceness of the increase of the field (Deut. 11:12); but He is the Husbandman of the Vine and the branches. He is training the Body in union with the Son of His love until all of the members come into the knowledge of Him to a perfect man.

It is this union which makes us of the same family with the Lord Jesus, and entitles us to hear of Him as "the First-born" (Rom. 8:29). It is this union of life which gives us the same glory with the Lord Jesus, and entitles us to look after Him as "the Forerunner" (Heb. 6:20). It is this which gives character to that life which we now have, and to that glory in which we shall be manifested, when He Who is our Life shall appear. --J.G. Bellett

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